

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Friday, September 8, 2023

Zak Brown

Gavin Ward

David Malukas

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us. Most importantly, David, welcome to Arrow McLaren, the McLaren Racing family.

We'll start with opening comments, then we'll open it up to the floor for media questions.

We have David Malukas, Arrow McLaren's newest driver joining the team for 2024. We have racing director Gavin Ward. And we have Zak Brown, CEO of McLaren Racing.

David, how does it feel to wear papaya?

DAVID MALUKAS: It feels amazing. Like I was telling Zak and Gavin earlier, just wearing the papaya, it kind of goes in the visual, everything just looks a lot brighter. We were just walking around.

No, I'm so excited, really excited to get started. Arrow McLaren have been on the heels of Chip and Penske all season. The future looks bright. When I talk with Gavin, the way he set the culture with the team, it's a place I really wanted to be a part of.

THE MODERATOR: Gavin, how do you think David is going to fit in with the team?

GAVIN WARD: We're really excited. We started with the analytics on this decision and David popped out for us as that's one of the best talents in INDYCAR, up-and-coming side here.

You go from there. It's not all about numbers. Really we're trying to build something here. As David mentioned, the culture, the way we work as a team and the way we enjoy going racing is a big part of it.

We got the ambition to make that next step, and I'm very excited. I think David is going to be a big part of that.

THE MODERATOR: Zak, what was it about David that led you to make this decision?

ZAK BROWN: I think when you're looking at drivers, you're looking at both them individually and how you think they'll fit in with your team and other drivers. As Gavin said, David's on-track talents are very clear, his track record. Also spoke with Oscar Piastrri, who raced with David.

When we look at our driver lineup with Pato O'Ward and Alexander Rossi, it's a fierce lineup of experience and youthfulness. I'm excited to go racing next year with David, Alex and Pato.

THE MODERATOR: We'll keep this focused on David and his time in 2024. We'll start with questions.

Q. (No microphone.)

GAVIN WARD: Yeah, I think that's right. I think David has accomplished a lot for a 21-year-old, going on 22. I think he'll be 22 officially by the time we get you in the car (smiling).

I think I should also mention that Tony Kanaan is going to help us a lot on trying to form this driver, set us up for long-term success here.

ZAK BROWN: Yeah, it's exactly right. As I mentioned before, looking at the trio of drivers, what we're trying to build with Gavin and the addition of Brian Barnhart joining the team. Having Tony, I've always been a fan of former champions as part of a racing team. I think we're building something to be a formidable competitor not just in '24 but beyond.

Q. David, you raced with Honda the last couple years. How much are you looking forward to a new engine partner and see how Chevrolet does their work in INDYCAR?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I'm very excited to join Team Chevy. There's going to be a few differences right off the bat. I'm really excited to learn all about it.



Arrow McLaren and the other Chevy teams have looked very strong all season. I think it's going to be a bright future.

Q. How helpful is it to bring David in in the off-season, with the new car coming?

GAVIN WARD: I think that's a great question. It gives us a chance to hit the ground running, better than we might otherwise have.

We're looking to get David in the car as soon as possible. The hybrid testing program is going to help us do that so we can hopefully get experience on a number of different styles of track, really understand what we need to do as a team to make David get the most out of his natural style.

Q. Gavin, you said analytics versus something you looked at. How deep of a statistic dive was it? What stood out?

GAVIN WARD: So I think we saw right away, even without kind of trying to normalize for team performance, David is right away one of the strongest oval racers already in the series. Looking at relative performance, trying to normalize for teams, that showed very positively over the last two years.

Then I think a little bit of just looking at the couple years in INDYCAR. That's a good level of experience. The age. The success in NXT. All the people he raced against. It all points to positive things.

I think beyond that, you go and you meet somebody, you start to understand their work ethic, how they might fit in with the team, personality, all that sort of stuff. It's not all about that. I think there's still a human touch here.

Q. David, obviously McLaren is connected to F1. Is that something you thought about with this whole thing? It's a question McLaren INDYCAR drivers always get.

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I think maybe could be something discussed in the future. But I fully came into this focused on the NTT INDYCAR SERIES. I very much will be for this next season.

Of course, there's always the talk of it. From my eyes, it's focused on here and now, have success and be a top contender.

Q. (No microphone.)

DAVID MALUKAS: I think, yeah, that's a very good

question.

It's definitely a big step up now being with Arrow McLaren. But for me, I very much feel ready and capable of it. The results are going to have to be top contenders. Going to try to compete with Chip and Penske, and at some time take over. We want to be at the top, and I feel like this is the No. 1 team to get the result.

Q. Zak, when Pato joined the team back in 2021, he already had a second- and third-place finish. You said if he had a first-place finish you'd put him in the F1 car. Is that a conversation you had with David at all or is that a conversation for a later time?

ZAK BROWN: David and I haven't spoken about F1, so... Probably just given him something to talk to me about (smiling).

We've been laser focused on INDYCAR.

Q. David, how excited are you to be working with Alex and Pato for next season?

DAVID MALUKAS: I'm super excited. They're both very talented in their own ways. I can't wait to try to get all the information I can from them, too.

Yeah, I think it's going to be a very good combination of us having a lot of fun together and also be very competitive.

Q. (No microphone.)

DAVID MALUKAS: I've gone through the Road to Indy Series through Laguna. It's always been an amazing track, one of my favorites, very special in its own ways.

Now with the experience, it's been I'd say a little bit of a reset with the new repavement. I think everyone has had that kind of mentality switch on how the braking zones and references are.

Overall we have a lot of testing. It's one of my favorites. A lot of history and can't wait to go back out today.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen. Welcome to the team and good luck this weekend.

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